

4006

TITCHFIELD,

24

A

POETICAL ESSAY.

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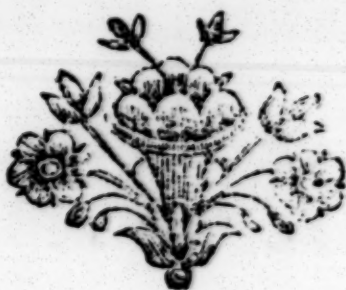
By JOHN MISSING.

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*To us there wants not many a happy Seat ;  
Look round the smiling Land, such Numbers rise,  
We hardly fix bewilder'd in our Choice.*

ARMSTRONG.

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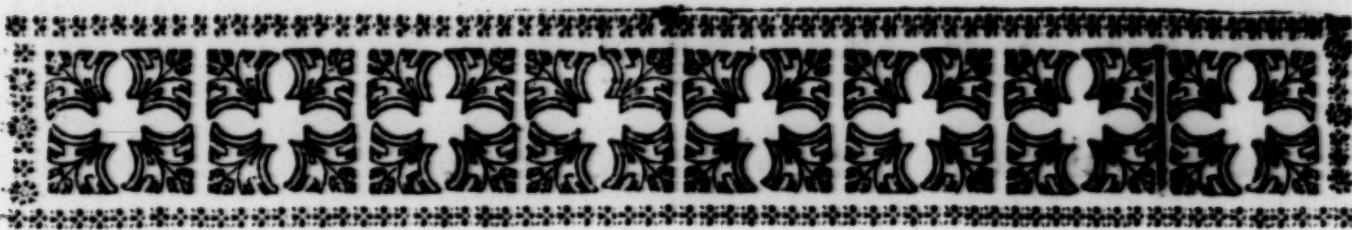
L O N D O N :

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED





<sup>a</sup> *TITCHFIELD.*



HALL *Titchfield* yet remain a Name un  
known,

In Song unsolemniz'd, whilst ev'ry Bard

Lifts high his fav'rite Vill' to sacred Fame?

Still *Cooper's Hill* tho' *Denham's* dead survives,

And shines immortal in his deathless Lines ;

5

Still *Windsor's* Beauties glow serenely bright,

And bloom eternal in the Strains of *Pope* :

And shall not I attempt to raise thy Name,

Thou much-lov'd native Place? tho' weak my Muse,

And artless be my Hand; yes, 'tis resolv'd ;

10

And thou, obscure, no more shalt bury'd lie

<sup>a</sup> A small Market-Town in the County of *Southampton*.



[ 4 ]

In dark Oblivion, but enjoy due Praise ;  
 Thou my *Parnassus* ; and thy gentle Stream  
 Shall prove my *Helicon* : inspir'd by thee  
 I dare attempt to sing, tho' else unskill'd.

15

What pleasing Prospects here my Mind delight,  
 Whilst ev'ry View strikes home upon my Soul  
 In sweet Sensations ? Yonder verdant Meads  
 I often wander'd o'er, in pleasing Peace  
 And youthful Innocence of Mind, unstain'd  
 By the Pollutions of the distant Town :  
 Nor shall the pleasing Murmurs of thy Stream  
 Be e'er forgot, if ought my Verse can do ;  
 Which oft' in me near-walking has arous'd  
 Poetic Rapture ; and awak'd my Soul  
 With tuneful Melody to solemn Song.

20

25

Sweetly



Sweetly romantic is the Prospect round ;  
 Here winds the Vale, and silent in the Midst  
 The solemn River parts the vary'd Meads,  
 And glides along majestically flow ; 30  
 Nor murmurs as it passes ; 'till, anon,  
 Down the abrupt Descent it rushing foams ;  
 And roars, and thunders to the adverse Hills :  
 Again becalmed, adown the Vale it flows,  
 And reaches soon the much resounding Main : 35  
 Not distant far the babbling Brook behold,  
 That o'er the Pebbles swiftly glides along,  
 And murmurs sweetly ; down the Vale it runs,  
 'Till by Degrees (by various Springs supply'd)  
 It widens to the Sight, and forms a Pool 40  
 Capacious, deep and broad ; for Art detains  
 The Waters, nor permits to reach the Sea :

Here



[ 6 ]

Here safely rest in Shoals the finny Breed,  
 The silver Trout, bespangled o'er with Gold,  
 Glides here secure, nor dreads the Angler's Hook; 45  
 The shining Carp lies in his oozy Bed,  
 Fearless of the entangling Net, and here  
 Riots the Eel, amidst the slimy Mud,  
 Nor fears a Scant of Waters: <sup>a</sup> *Missing* these  
 You visit oft; --- --- O patronize my Song, 50  
 And may my Muse and Theme at once delight.

But oft the Otter in the Dead of Night  
 Glides down the Stream, and ravages the Floods;  
 By Day amidst the rustling Reeds he lurks,  
 And as his Deeds are evil, flies the Light; 55  
<sup>c</sup> the suspicious Thief (of Day afraid)  
 In secret hides him 'till the Night's Approach;

<sup>a</sup> *Thomas Missing, Esq;*

Then



Then lawless rushes forth to seek for Prey ;  
 Behold the Villain's Track, here plant your Gins,  
 And feize the Murd'rer here, while on his Search : 60  
 That done, in Triumph, to the Village bear  
 The hostile Animal ; there let the Dogs  
 The rav'ning Traitor bait, and glut their Rage,  
 'Till he beneath their Vengeance justly falls,  
 And suffers for his Crimes: Nor let the Gun 65  
 Be spar'd from the destructive Cormorant  
 The Fish to guard ; for in the Face of Day  
 He dares to come, and in his Beak, or Claws,  
 Bears off his Prey : Behold him rise ev'n now,  
 And lift the rigling Eel aloft in Air, 70  
 Unus'd to soar on high amid the Clouds ;  
 But see the Gun well-aim'd; the Bullets fly  
 Impetuous thro' the yielding Element,  
 And as the Noise resounds, the Plund'rer falls.



To Earth, but still retains his Prey; and grasps 75  
 It fast, tho' in the Agonies of Death.

There view the adverse Hills, the Eastern see  
 Just reddens with the Dawn; 'now o'er its Top  
 Appears the Sun, and shines refulgent forth;  
 Behold the Trees lift up their Heads to Heav'n, 80  
 And spread around their Branches, shelt'ring all  
 The weaker Shrubs, clad with delightful green;  
 There see the Fields well-cultivated laugh  
 With Ceres' Bounty crown'd; and here the Flocks  
 Rove on the Western Hill; and bleat aloud; 85  
 While Herds, responsive, in the Valley low.

See Northward from the Town a <sup>a</sup> Mansion rise,  
 And claim our Rev'rence for it's wond'rous Age:

<sup>a</sup> *Titchfield* Palace.



Tho' now its tott'ring Tow'rs are sunk in Dust,  
And all its former Glories are no more : 90

Yet shall the Muse (well knowing what it was)  
Its Origin declare, and whence it rose.

When the first *Edward England's* Sceptre sway'd,  
A Baron liv'd, and *Edgar* was his Name,  
Valiant in War, and skill'd in Arts of Peace ; 95

Near this he dwelt where yonder <sup>a</sup> Tow'r uprears  
Its antient Head, and threatens soon a Fall ;

(A Farmer's Dwelling now tho' then a Lord's ;)

One Morn' across the Vale he took his Way

In Contemplation deep, till struck at once 100

By the loud Fall of the indignant Stream

He started back, and from his Resverie

Awoke ; by Chance at the same Time a Maid

Pass'd by, more beauteous than the rising Dawn ;

Her Skin like polish'd Alabaster seem'd ; 105

<sup>a</sup> *St. Margaret's.*

B

Jetty



Jetty her Hair ; black as the downy Sloe  
 Her charming Eyes ; her Cheeks with Blushes glow'd,  
 Like fair *Aurora* ush'ring in the Day ;  
 Her thin soft Lips wore a Vermillion Dye ;  
 Her polish'd Teeth like Iv'ry Rows appear'd ; 110  
 Her dimply Chin was elegantly form'd ;  
 White was her Neck ; and like the new-fall'n Snow  
 Her heaving Breasts ; her well-turn'd Shape he view'd  
 With Admiration ; and her round smooth Arms,  
 And Fingers small, and tap'ring, pleas'd his View ; 115  
 Erect her Stature ; and her heav'nly Mein  
 Struck to his Soul ; he gaz'd upon the Fair,  
 And felt the God of Love in ev'ry Vein:  
 At length he spake, or rather strove to speak,  
 For the unfinish'd Accents dy'd away 120  
 Upon his quiv'ring Tongue ; his am'rous Looks  
 She saw, and his disorder'd Soul alarm'd.

Her



[ II ]

Her Fears, at once she trembled and she fled ;  
 He stood astonish'd while she reach'd the Town,  
 Unable to pursue ; what could he do ! 125

*Eliza* (so the Fair was call'd) was fled,  
 But left her Image stamp'd upon his Heart ;  
 Some time he mus'd, nor knew what Course to take ;  
 But soon reflecting on his Heaps of Wealth,

His Lands, and Honours, that he could bestow, 130

His Pride at once proclaim'd the Maid his own :  
 Ah ! little did he think in her Esteem

How small were Toys of Empire, when compar'd  
 With *Celadon*, her lov'd, her faithful Swain.

Resolv'd at last he offer'd to the Fair 135

His high Condition, and the nuptial Tye,  
 Would she consent, and yield him up her Heart :

How dreadfully amaz'd he stood, when she  
 Refus'd his Offers, and her plighted Faith



To *Celadon* confes'd : As when a Man 140  
 Struck by the Bolt of angry *Jove*, remains  
 A horrid Monument of heav'nly Wrath ;  
 So *Edgar* stood, astonish'd, terrify'd :  
 At length a Groan burst forth : His Eyes he cast  
 Onewhile on Heav'n, and onewhile on the Fair : 145  
 How willingly, O *Edgar*, would'st thou then  
 Have chang'd thy Pomp, thy Honours, and thy State  
 For *Caledon's*, tho' but a rustic Youth ?  
 Long motionless he stood, till glimm'ring Hope  
 Dispell'd the Gloom, and pointed out a Way, 150  
 A horrid Way ! thro' Murder to be blest :  
 Four Ruffians skilful in the Trade of Death  
 He hired, to dispatch the honest Swain,  
 His Rival, who was often wont at Eve,  
 With the fair Nymph in am'rous Talk engag'd, 155  
 To walk along the River's verdant Banks :



A Wood there was, just where the Western Hill  
Declines into the Vale, (the Place where now  
The solemn Mansion stands) here they resolv'd  
To do the curst Deed, and lay in wait 160  
Till his accustom'd Hour to walk was come;  
The Time drew nigh, and her presaging Heart  
Foreboded Evil, to the Youth she told  
Her Fears; but *Celadon* the Virgin cheer'd  
With Words like these, and clasp'd her to his Breast: 165  
Fear not my fair one; thou art Innocence;  
And *Celadon* with thee no Evil dreads;  
Heav'n looks well-pleas'd upon our virtuous Love;  
And still will guard us from impending Harms;  
He said, she inly-sobbing drop'd a Tear, 170  
Nor knew the Cause, and with unwilling Step  
Went with her Swain again the well-known Way:  
Now to the Place they came, when lo behind

Out



Out rush'd the Ruffians on the fearless Youth ;  
 They seiz'd him fast, and lifted high in Air 175  
 Their treach'rous Blades; the Virgin shriek'd aloud ;  
 And O what Horror struck her tender Soul,  
 When she beheld her much-lov'd Swain expire  
 Beneath redoubled Wounds ! Upon the Earth  
 Prostrate she fell, and call'd on Heav'n to save 180  
 Her Lover, but in vain ; her Hair she tore ;  
 She beat her beauteous Breast ; and frantic grown,  
 In Fury on the bloody Villains rush'd ;  
 Then on the murder'd Body threw herself,  
 And held her Lover in a firm Embrace ; 185  
 But quick arising loudly she exclaim'd,  
 O stay fond Youth, my faithful Shepherd stay,  
 I too will die, and follow him I love ;  
 She spake ; and plung'd at once beneath the Stream,  
 Nor rose again ; for firmly fix'd to die, 190  
 She



She grasp'd a Willow's Root that shot athwart  
The River, and retain'd it fast in Death.

*Edgar* enrag'd to find the Fair was lost,

And all his Hopes abortive, seiz'd his Sword

Resolv'd on Death, but those around preserv'd 195

Their groaning Lord, and sav'd him from himself:

Near to the Place a godly Hermit dwelt,

Who came to calm the frantic *Edgar's* Soul ;

At length Repentance deep within his Breast,

And true Contrition reign'd, for his Offence; 200

His Soul grew more serene, and by a Vow

(The Hermit so advis'd) he bound himself

A Monast'ry to build, and dedicate

To Heav'n, to expiate his horrid Crime,

Just where the Lovers fell ; this he perform'd, 205

And hence the Structure rose ; nor lost the Use

For which it was ordain'd, till Pop'ry fled.:

There



There afterwards *Southampton* liv'd in State,  
 And many Nobles in a long Descent  
 Enjoy'd it, as their Place of Residence ; 210

Till *Charles* pursu'd by *Cromwell's* conqu'ring Arm  
 Found some short Safety here ; and from that Time  
 It dwindled down, to what it now appears.

How vain is human Greatness ! bury'd deep  
 In dark Oblivion till this Hour remain'd 215

The Founder's Name, nor could the faithless Stone  
 Transmit his Mem'ry to this distant Age,

Or save itself from Time's enormous Scythe ;  
 No Trace of all its pristine Honours now  
 Remains, but one rude indigested Heap 220

Appears the once so great and pompous Pile.

Westward from thence a goodly Scene behold,  
 Now Fields of Corn, but heretofore preserv'd  
 For Game, the rustling Deer made his Abode

Amidst



Amidst yon Woods, and tenanted the Shade ; 225  
 Now where the Stag roam'd free, and unconfin'd,  
 Hedges enclose, and Corn erects its Head,  
 Flocks bleat, Herds low, and all the Lands around  
 A diff'rent Aspect wear.

More Northward still

Direct your Eye along the verdant Vale : 230  
 Behold what dark'ning Clouds arrest your View,  
 And smoaky Volumes roll aloft in Air ;  
<sup>a</sup> There dwells a hardy Race ; to Fire inur'd,  
 And never-ceasing toil, from Morn to Eve,  
 Beneath their sturdy Blows the Anvils groan. 235

Southward a <sup>b</sup> House fair built, and large behold,  
 Modern its Front, and neatly plain appears ;  
 Its Rear, high Elms from northern Blasts defend ;  
 Here *Rickmon* dwells, a Friend to rural Life,  
 Wisely he shuns the Hurry of the World, 240

<sup>a</sup> An Iron Mill.

<sup>b</sup> *Postbrook*.



And courts Content amid the peaceful Shades ;  
 Here liv'd my Sire, and from Ambition free  
 Obscurely spent his Days, but smit with Love  
 Of Science, and Philosophy profound.  
 Here too the Light I first beheld, and near  
 The Spot would I reside, till Death shall call  
 My Body to rejoin my Parent Dust.

245

Look 'cross the Vale, and see more South a<sup>a</sup> Seat,  
 In Air erected high, of modern Date,  
 Built by thy Sire, O *Missing*, whose Renown  
 For Virtue, Industry, and Love of Man,  
 Still fills the Country round : The Orphan chear'd  
 Look'd up to him, nor knew a Father's Loss;  
 The Widow found in him a certain Friend,  
 And ceas'd to mourn ; no more the Innocent  
 Were heard to groan beneath Oppression's Rod ;  
 The Poor were by his lib'ral Hand supply'd ;

250

250

<sup>a</sup> Stubbington.



Affliction comforted; and Woe remov'd;  
 Yet where the Source from whence his Bounty flow'd?  
 His Industry alone, and fav'ring Heav'n: 260  
 Commerce thro' him reviv'd, and thro' the Land  
 Spread Plenty: Trade another Aspect wore,  
 And ev'ry lab'ring Hand was fill'd with Joy:  
 O could my Numbers equal now my Theme,  
 And bid thy Name illustrious Shade survive, 265  
*Britannia's* Sons for Ages yet unborn,  
 Should learn to flourish, and to act from thee;  
 But ah! my Wish is vain, I can no more  
 Than search the <sup>a</sup> House of God by thee enlarg'd,  
 And there with Tears mourn o'er thy sacred Dust. 270  
 View onward still as far as Sight extends,  
 Where <sup>b</sup> *Vesta's* verdant Hills with Clouds commix;  
 Than which no Spot is more belov'd of Heav'n,  
 More fam'd for fertile Fields, or beauteous Dames:

<sup>a</sup> *Crafter Church.*

<sup>b</sup> *The Isle of Wight.*



There ends thy Reign, O Liberty, fenc'd in, 275

And guarded well by *Neptune's* azure Realms ;

For far beyond the undulating Main

Rolls wide, and where again the Land appears,

Oppression rules, and Freedom is no more :

Thrice happy *Britain!* thy brave Sons are free, 280

And far as thou extend'st thy blest Domain,

Flourishes Commerce, Arts and Labour thrive ;

And ev'ry Virtue, ev'ry Bliss is known.

Next on the Village cast your Eyes, were high

In Air the lofty May-pole rears its Head, 285

And to the World a <sup>a</sup> shameful Peace proclaims :

Then view the empty Market, how the Place

For that erected stands unoccupy'd ;

In Times of old 'tis said, the Town enjoy'd

Some Commerce ; but it now neglected lies, 290

<sup>a</sup> This May-pole was erected on Account of the Peace of *Utrecht*, and its Vane has the Word *PAX*, and the Year 1713, cut thro' it.

And



And Husbandry alone the Folk employs.

Here Silence reigns, unless when rural Sports

Call forth the rosy Youth ; and Jollity,

And Gambols, reign around : How humbly blest

Are these ? exempt from all the tasteless Pomp, 295

And splendid Mis'ries that attend a Court.

See there the Vale funeral, and the Fane

Of the most high, how awful is the Scene !

This to the Service of the God of Heav'n

Is dedicated, sacred to the Dead 300

Is that ; around behold what Numbers sleep

In silent Dust, who once wore human Forms.

And peopled all the neighb'ring Country round :

Here blended lie the wealthy, and the poor,

Now undistinguish'd ; Death has levell'd all, 305

And thrown Distinctions of the World aside ;

Behold their Bones, and tell me if you can,

Which



Which to the Beggar, which the Prince belong'd :

No more distinguish'd here are Sex and Age ;

The fair and the deform'd confus'dly lie 310

In the same Heap, and have one common Bed :

Here may we view the End of all below :

Here solemn Contemplation strikes my Soul,

And bids her moralize on what she sees :

Learn hence you vain, how short your Stay on Earth, 315

How little Time for Vanity's allow'd :

Already Death's at Hand, and while you laugh

Secure of many Years, he strikes the Blow.

And levels all your Honours with the Dust :

O may I be prepar'd. 320

But hark the Knell

Sounds solemn ; 'tis the dismal Voice of Death ;

The Summons to the Tomb ; a <sup>a</sup> beauteous Maid

Amid the Bloom of Youth's cut off, and call'd

<sup>a</sup> Miss Rebecca Monday.

To



To feast the Worms ; her Form angelic now  
Must moulder into Dust, and not one Grace 325

Of all she once possess'd remain behind :

Attend ye Fair, and learn like her to prize

Those Charms which Death can never snatch away.

Ha ! what behold I now ? my Father's Tomb ;  
There rest my Ancestors, and I too there 330

Must shortly with them sleep : Let me draw near.

Behold the Stone, uncrumbled into Dust,

As yet preserves the Names of those below :

What read I there ? that they were born, and dy'd,

Is all the Superscription tells ; their Lives, 335

Or good, or bad, (except the last) conceal'd ;

And all the Fame by this convey'd's no more

Than what the Dust beneath had once a Name :

But see the last, " Here *Missing* lies, a Man

Of Probity, and unsuspected Truth." 340

Hail



Hail parent Shade, thy Race thou well hast run ;

And may my Deeds on Earth resemble thine,

Like thee retir'd from Noise and worldly Strife,

I'd roam the Plains and trace the Works of God :

Be Honesty the Purpose of my Soul ;

345

And be my Truth like thine without a Stain.

Now let us enter, and the Temple view ;

Here Silence and Solemnity reside :

But often Silence flies, when Duty calls

The willing People to adore their God.

350

Here often solemn Pray'r is heard, and hence

Loud Hallelujahs sent from Souls devout,

Arise to Heav'n.

Within the sacred Walls

More Tombs I view ; this to the Left appears

Etfac'd, and all its Decorations lost ;

355

With Difficulty from the mould'ring Stone,

I learn



I learn a Husband's Sorrows for a Wife

Belov'd, and sympathizing mourn ; the right

Presents me with the Names of some unknown

Till now ; some of a later Date I view ;

360

Others devouring Time has swept away.

Behold *Southampton's* Monument enclos'd,

Well-finish'd is the curious Pile ; see there

The Marble seems to weep, and here to pray ;

On high, the Furniture of War behold.

365

The rusty Helmet, and discolour'd Shield ;

Around, the Names of those who lie interr'd ;

Beneath, the gloomy Vault ; there sleeps the Dust

Of proud Nobility, who boasted once

Their Titles, and Estates, and all the Pomp

370

The World could give, or made Ambition crave :

Dismal the Place ; and dark unwholesome Air

Dwells in the dark Recess ; what shudd'ring Awe



Arises as our hollow Steps resound !

There I behold against the mouldy Walls, 375

All the Remains of Grandeur, and Renown,

Of Poms, and Pleasures, Policy, and State :

Here in my Breast let all Ambition die,

And may I learn from hence to scorn the World,

Its Riches, Glories, and its Follies all. 380

Welcome again thou friendly Light of Day ;

The Place I quit, but on my Heart be all

These Images engrav'd ; nor let the Scenes

Of gayer Life erase 'em from my Breast.

But see what *Celia*, Glory of the Plain, 385

(And with her charming *Anna*) walks along,

T' enjoy the Coolness of the Ev'ning Breeze,

In youthful Grace and Innocence array'd ;

The first behold, her Features how exact !

How white the Tincture of a snowy Skin! 390

How



How sweet her Mein ! majestically tall  
 Her Stature, and her Shape proportion'd well  
 Compleats the whole with Symmetry divine ;  
 While *Anna* equals ev'ry blooming Grace,  
 And stands confest less regularly fair : 395  
 Nor shall thy Beauties in Oblivion lie  
*Eliza*, equal to the beauteous Dame,  
 So call'd, who fell to unsuccessful Love  
 A Victim, and in *Titchfield's* Stream expir'd :  
 A happier Lot be thine, if e'er thy Heart 400  
 (As few escape th' imperious Passion's Pow'r)  
 Shall feel its Force, and thou confess the Dart :  
 Thy Sister too the Muses shall extol,  
 Fair in her Form, but fairer in her Mind,  
 And with *Prudentia's* Name adorn my Song. 405

The Country round now Summer's Liv'ry wears ;  
 But when autumnal Blasts lay waste the Woods,

And



And Winter binds the Floods in icy Chains,  
 The rustic Youths pursue the feather'd Game ;  
 And loud-mouth'd Dogs the Windings of the Hare 410  
 Unravel, while the Woods, the neighb'ring Streams,  
 And distant Hills, re-echo to the Sound.  
 Hail much-lov'd Country ! as the Seasons roll,  
 Varying the Face of Nature, thou remain'st  
 Still beautiful, no less when wintry Blasts, 415  
 And frigid Air lock up the secret Source  
 Of Vegetation, than when Spring returns  
 And clothes the Year in all her blooming Charms.  
 Forgive the Muse who in advent'rous Strains  
 Has strove to sing, and touch'd the sounding Lyre 420  
 O *Titchfield* to thy Praise ; (vain my Essay  
 To raise thee into Fame ; my Name unknown,  
 And artless is my Muse ;) the Will accept ;  
 A Wish is all ; and I can wish no more.



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